

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 1069

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: SOCI SHUM MOPS PINS PDEV VM LA CB
SUBJECT: FULRO STATUS; 1975-76

SUMMARY: A CAMBODIAN MAN WHO WAS CONFINED IN A KONTUM PRISON FROM NOVEMBER 1975 TO FEBRUARY 1976 DESCRIBED TO EMBOFF THE STATUS OF THE FULRO RESISTANCE MOVEMENT (FRONT UNIFIE DE LUTTE DES RACKES OPPRIMEES) AS OF EARLY 1976 AS REPORTEDLY RELATED TO HIM BY THE "COMMANDER" OF A FULRO BATTALION WHO WAS IMPRISONED AT KONTUM WITH SOURCE. THE FOLLOWING IS REPORTEDLY DRAWN FROM THE COMMANDER'S INFORMATION ON FULRO ORGANIZATION, STRENGTH, EQUIPMENT, TACTICS, LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGY/OBJECTIVES. END SUMMARY.

1. THERE WERE REPORTEDLY ELEVEN FULRO BATTALIONS, EACH CONTAINING 700 TO 800 PERSONNEL. FULRO REPORTEDLY SUFFERED ORGANIZATIONALLY FROM AN INABILITY TO ESTABLISH
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SMALL UNITS ("CELLS") BECAUSE OF MONTAGNARD'S INABILITY TO KEEP SECRETS AND GENERAL GULLIBILITY IN DEALINGS WITH THE VIETNAMESE.

2. FULRO FORCES REPORTEDLY MAINTIANED LARGE STOCKS OF WEAPONS CONSISTING OF CLAYMORE MINES, 60 MM AND 80 MM MORTARS, M-72'S, M-79'S AND M-16'S, PLUS AMMUNITION,

AS WELL AS TRADITIONAL WEAPONS SUCH AS KNIVES AND SWORDS. THE FULRO FORCE'S EXTENSIVE WEAPONS STOCK-PILES CONSISTED OF WELL-MAINTAINED WEAPONS CACHED FROM THE PERIOD BEFORE THE COMMUNIST VICTORY AS WELL AS WEAPONS CAPTURED OR STOLEN FROM DEFEATED ARVN TROOPS AND FROM THE COMMUNIST FORCES AFTER THE COMMUNIST VICTORY. WEAPON CACHES WERE REPORTEDLY WELL HIDDEN AND MOVED FREQUENTLY.

3. THE COMMANDER REPORTEDLY SAID THAT THE FULRO FORCES WERE PRIMARILY ENGAGED IN SMALL OPERATIONS SUCH AS AMBUSHES OF SMALL COMMUNIST VIETNAMESE PATROLS AND ASSASSINATIONS OF COMMUNIST CADRE.

4. THE FULRO STRATEGY AT THAT PERIOD WAS TO WAIT, THERE BEING NO ORDER FROM THE FULRO CHIEF Y BAHAM TO BEGIN LARGE SCALE ACTIONS. THE LONG TERM OBJECTIVE WAS TO ESTABLISH AN INDEPENDENT MONTAGNARD STATE COMPRISING THE AREA OF THE GVN MILITARY REGION II. THE COMMANDER ALSO SAID THAT THE MONTAGNARDS WOULD GLADLY ACCEPT THE FORMATION OF A CONFEDERATION WITH LAOS AND CAMBODIA BUT NOT WITH VIETNAM. HE REPORTEDLY NOTED THAT THERE WAS NO COOPERATION BETWEEN THE MONTAGNARDS AND THE ANTI-COMMUNIST VIETNAMESE.

5. THE CAMBODIAN SOURCE SAID THAT UPON HIS RELEASE
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FROM KONTUM PRISON HE ENTERED LAOS NEAR BEN HET (VIC YB6828) AND THAT IN THAT REGION HE HEARD WHAT SOUNDED LIKE "105'S" FOR HOURS. HE THEORIZED THAT THE GUNS HAD BEEN BROUGHT INTO USE BY THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS AGAINST THE FULRO FORCES.

6. COMMENT: IN JUNE 1977, A WESTERN TRAVELER VISITING BAN ME THUOT WAS TOLD BY VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES THAT HE COULD NOT LEAVE HIS GUARDED COMPOUND AT NIGHT BECAUSE OF LARGE NUMBERS OF "BANDITS" IN THE AREA. THE PROHIBITION EVEN EXTENDED TO A VIETNAMESE CADRE TRAVELING WITH THE WESTERNER.

7. INFORMATION DRAWN FROM THE CAMBODIAN'S REPORT IS DATED, THOUGH INFORMATION PARA 6 SUGGESTS THAT SECURITY REMAINS A PROBLEM IN THE FORMER "MILITARY REGION II".
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